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| Course Title (English) | Educational Psychology |
| Academic Institution | Universidad Hispanoamericana |
| City | Heredia |
| Country | Costa Rica |
| Sessions (Terms) | Spring Semester (UO Winter Quarter) |
| Instructional Language | English |
| Contact Hours | 40 |
| Credits (semester credits) | 3 |
| Credits (quarter units) | 4 |
| Prerequisites | NA |
| Track | Education, Psychology, Human Services |
| Notes | <p>This course is offered over the course of 3 weeks Monday to Friday from 2:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Feb 8 – Feb 27, 2026, simultaneously with the Education Psychology Internships from 8AM -11:00 AM approximately. This course is meant to be a support for this practical experience, providing students with cultural context, analysis, methodologies, and frameworks to help them thrive in their internship placement.</p> |

Internship placements can include schools, NGOs, government agencies, clinics, and organizations focused on:

- Community engagement and/or health organizations
- Social work / shadowing case work
- Parent education
- NGOs (students can do program evaluation)
- Community interviews and intake forms
- Youth development/enrichment activities
- Social-emotional learning activities
- Special Education Institutions

Course Objectives

This course, examines cognitive, social, and emotional development in children and adolescents, along with key learning theories such as constructivism and behavioral approaches. The course emphasizes cross-cultural perspectives on education and prepares you to integrate theory with your internship experience.

Designed for undergraduate students in Education, Psychology, and Family and Human Services, the course examines the intersection of culture, learning, and psychological well-being in a Central American setting.

Through classroom learning, service learning, local experts, and community engagement, students gain critical insights into culturally responsive teaching, local mental health paradigms, and the role of socio-cultural context in shaping development and educational outcomes.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Explain major theories of cognitive, social, and emotional development from early childhood through adolescence and the cultural context within Costa Rica and Central America.
- Analyze behavioral, constructivist, and socio-cultural learning theories and apply them to diverse classroom, with an understanding of Central American and Costa Rican cultural contexts.
- Identify how culture shapes educational expectations, teaching practices, and student development.
- Observe and reflect on development and learning in real classroom and community settings during internship placements in Costa Rica.
- Integrate educational psychology theory into culturally responsive teaching strategies and professional practice with a cultural dimension and intersectionality.

- Demonstrate critical thinking and self-reflection about their own cultural assumptions and experiences in Costa Rica and their impact on teaching/learning.

Course Contents

I. FOUNDATIONS & CONTEXT

1. Fundamentals of Educational Psychology; role of culture & school

- Costa Rican education system and cultural values
- Fundamentals of Educational Psychology

2. Human Development & Neuroeducation

- Human development across childhood and adolescence
- Neuroeducation: cognitive development & information processing
- Role of environment and inheritance in learning

3. Learning Theories I: Behavioral Approaches

- Classical and operant conditioning
- Behavior modification and classroom management

4. Learning Theories II: Piaget & Constructivism

- Piaget's stages of intellectual development and thought structures
- Assimilation, accommodation, and equilibration
- Knowledge construction and principles of constructivism

5. Socio-Cultural Approach & Costa Rican Psychopedagogy

- Vygotsky's theory of assisted learning and scaffolding
- Zone of proximal development and teaching mediation
- Costa Rican psychopedagogical practices in context

II. DIVERSITY, MOTIVATION & APPLIED PRACTICE

6. Differentiated & Inclusive Education

- Learning styles and cultural frameworks
- Curriculum adaptations and strategies for diverse classrooms

7. Socio-Cognitive Theory & Self-Regulated Learning

- Bandura and Mischel's socio-cognitive contributions
- Self-regulated learning processes
- Teacher self-efficacy and modeling

8. Family & Human Services in Costa Rica

- Family systems and their influence on learning
- Community resources for child and adolescent development
- Connections between social services and education

9. Intelligence and Creativity in Education

- Evolution of the concepts of intelligence and creativity
- Giftedness and intellectual challenges
- Creativity and innovation in classroom practice

10. Midpoint Synthesis: Designing Culturally Responsive Interventions

- Integration of internship observations and course theories
- Collaborative design of culturally responsive educational or mental-health interventions

III. INTEGRATION, ETHICS & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**11. Motivation and Learning / Educational Evaluation**

- Types of motivation and their impact on academic success
- Assessment tools: formative and summative evaluation
- Costa Rican perspectives on student evaluation

12. Ethics and Cultural Humility in Practice

- Ethical decision-making in education and community work
- Host-family interviews and thematic cultural analysis

Course Chronogram

| Week | Day & Date | Topic | Mediation Strategies | Readings & Assignments |
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| Week 1 | Session 1 Monday Feb. 9 th | Orientation & Course Overview Fundamentals of Educational Psychology; role of culture & school | - Introductory Lecture & Guided Syllabus Exploration - Concept Mapping | - Sign up for project groups - The effect of teacher's attitudes in supporting inclusive education by catering to diverse learners - Reflective Journal #1 |
| | Session 2 Tuesday Feb. 10 th | Human Development & Neuroeducation | - Interactive Lecture - Guided Dialogue | - Neuroeducation: understanding neural dynamics in learning and teaching - Reflective Journal #2 |
| | Session 3 Wednesday Feb. 11 th | Learning Theories I Behavioral approaches | - Interactive Lecture - Structured Simulation | - Classroom management and facilitation approaches that foster school connectedness - Reflective Journal #3 |
| | Session 4 Thursday Feb. 12 th | Learning Theories II Piaget & Constructivism | - Comparative Debate - Analytical Concept-Mapping Workshop | - The role of teachers' constructivist beliefs in classroom practice - Reflective Journal #4 |
| | Session 5 Friday Feb. 13 th | Socio-cultural Learning & Costa Rican Psychopedagogy | - Lecture and Q&A - Mini-Ethnographic Design Exercise | - Instructor learning in higher education: An analysis through the lens of sociocultural theory - Quiz #1 |

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| Week 2 | Session 6 Monday Feb. 16 th | Differentiated & Inclusive Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Problem-Based Learning Workshop - Academic Poster Session | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Differentiating instruction: Understanding the key elements and challenges - Reflective Journal #5 |
| | Session 7 Tuesday Feb. 17 th | Socio-cognitive Theory & Self-Regulated Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peer Coaching Simulation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-regulated learning: A key factor in the effectiveness of online learning - Reflective Journal #6 |
| | Session 8 Wednesday Feb. 18 th | Family & Human Services in Costa Rica | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contextual Lecture and Critical Reading Discussion - Role-Play of School-Family Conferences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnering with families through special education - Reflective Journal #7 |
| | Session 9 Thursday Feb. 19 th | Intelligence & Creativity in Education Giftedness, intellectual difficulties | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scholarly Seminar on Creativity Theories - Innovation Lab | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluating gifted students' perceptions of the characteristics of effective teachers - Reflective Journal #8 |
| | Session 10 Friday Feb. 20 th | Midpoint Synthesis Design of culturally responsive interventions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design-Thinking Studio - Structured Peer Feedback Roundtable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culturally responsive leadership: A critical analysis of one district's equity plan - Quiz #2 |
| Week 3 | Session 11 Monday Feb. 23 rd | Motivation & Learning / Educational Evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interactive Lecture - Case Analysis - Collaborative Assessment Workshop | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a supportive classroom environment through teachers' effective feedback - Reflective Journal #9 |
| | Session 12 Tuesday Feb. 24 th | Ethics & Cultural Humility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethics Case Colloquium - Guided Field- | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rethinking cultural competence: Shifting to cultural |

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| | | Interview and Thematic Reflection | humility - Reflective Journal #10 |
| Session 13 Wednesday Feb. 25 th | Linking Theory and Practice Integration of field observations | - Research-to-Practice Dialogue - Critical Friend Peer Review | Reflective practices in education: A primer for practitioners |
| Session 14 Thursday Feb. 26 th | Final Group Presentations | - Academic Conference Simulation - Structured Peer Evaluation | Final Project Due |
| Session 15 Friday Feb. 27 th | Reflective Integration & Final Exam | - World Café Reflection - Summative Final Assessment | Final Evaluation |

Mediation Strategies

Students will engage in a variety of structured activities to connect classroom content with their field experiences via their internships and cultural immersion. These include:

- Lectures and discussions: Foundational sessions led by the instructor to explore core theories and contextual knowledge about Costa Rican education and psychology.
- Guest speakers: Presentations from local professionals (teachers, psychologists) to provide first-hand perspectives.
- Host family cultural interviews: Semi-structured interviews with host family members to understand family dynamics and cultural values.
- Group workshops and Collaborative projects: In-class teamwork to design culturally responsive educational or mental health interventions.
- Reflective journals: Daily Visible Thinking Routine (VTR) reflections connecting field experiences to course themes, including analysis of personal cultural assumptions.
- Quizzes, final project, and final presentation: Regular formative assessments plus a culminating project and presentation to demonstrate synthesis of learning.

Methodology

This course uses a situated learning, experiential and participatory approach that integrates academic content with real-world engagement. Students will build cultural understanding and professional skills through a blend of classroom instruction and community-based learning. Instruction includes lectures, discussions, and readings to establish theoretical foundations.

Daily internship placements serve as a living laboratory (situated learning), allowing students to directly observe and practice culturally responsive strategies.

Reflective journals (VTR) and group discussions are used to encourage critical thinking and integration of lived experiences.

Collaborative projects foster teamwork and problem-solving, while assessments ensure students demonstrate growth in cultural competence, analytical skills, and professional application.

Assessment

Based on the contents of the course, students will take ownership of both formative and summative assessment on assignments, class activities, and exams as follows:

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| • Class participation and attendance | 15% |
| • Quizzes (2) | 10% |
| • Reflective journals | 15% |
| • Final group project | 25% |
| • Final group oral presentation | 15% |
| • Final evaluation | 20% |

Group Project

Task: In teams of 3–5, design an evidence-based, culturally responsive educational or mental-health intervention linked to your internship experience.

Purpose: To synthesize and apply the theories, cultural perspectives, and field observations developed throughout the course and internship. Students will collaboratively design a culturally responsive educational or mental-health intervention that addresses a real need observed at their internship placement.

Learning Outcomes:

- Integrate key concepts from developmental, behavioral, constructivist, socio-cultural, and socio-cognitive theories.
- Demonstrate skills in research, critical analysis, and culturally responsive design.
- Collaborate effectively in interdisciplinary, intercultural teams.

Project Components

1. Needs Assessment (Week 2)

- Identify and document a real challenge or gap encountered in the internship site (e.g., literacy difficulties, socio-emotional skills, family engagement).
- Gather supporting data: interviews, short surveys, or field observations.

2. Theoretical Framework & Rationale

- Link the identified need to at least three course theories (e.g., Vygotsky's ZPD, Bandura's modeling, neuroeducation principles).
- Integrate relevant Costa Rican cultural or policy context.

3. Intervention Design

- Describe objectives, target population, key activities, timeline, and required resources.

- Incorporate inclusive and differentiated strategies (UDL/PIAR, socio-emotional supports).
- Include at least one active teaching methodology (e.g., project-based learning, visible thinking routines).

4. Implementation Plan & Evaluation

- Outline step-by-step implementation.
- Propose assessment tools (formative and summative) to measure impact.
- Consider sustainability and scalability.

5. Reflective and Ethical Dimension

- Discuss how the team applied cultural humility and ethical decision-making in project design.
- Reflect on team collaboration and learning.

Deliverables

- **Written Report (12–15 pages)**
 - Executive summary
 - Needs assessment & context
 - Theoretical framework
 - Intervention design
 - Implementation & evaluation plan
 - Reflection and references (APA 7th)
- **Visual Component:** infographic, poster, or slide deck summarizing the intervention for community partners.
- **Oral Presentation (15 minutes):** academic conference format during Session 14, with Q&A.

Final Group Project Rubric

Total: 100 points (25% of course grade)

| Criteria | Excellent 90-100 | Proficient 80-89 | Basic 70-79 | Needs Improvement <70 | Points |
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| 1. Needs Assessment & Context | Clearly identifies a real, well-documented educational or mental-health need based on field data. | Identifies a clear need with supporting data and some attention to context. | Need is somewhat clear but weakly supported or missing cultural connections. | Need is vague, unsupported, or not tied to context. | ___ /20 |
| 2. Theoretical Integration | Seamlessly integrates at least three major course theories. Theoretical rationale is explicit and insightful. | Integrates at least two major theories with adequate rationale. | Limited use of theory or weak theoretical rationale. | Minimal or no theoretical foundation. | ___ /20 |
| 3. Intervention Design & Innovation | Presents a creative, feasible, and detailed culturally responsive intervention. Includes inclusive and differentiated strategies (UDL/PIAR). | Presents a solid and feasible intervention with some creative or inclusive elements. | Intervention is functional but lacks innovation or inclusivity. | Intervention is unclear, impractical, or culturally inappropriate. | ___ /20 |
| 4. Implementation & Evaluation Plan | Provides a step-by-step, realistic plan with clear timeline, resources, and valid formative and summative evaluation tools. | Provides a complete plan with reasonable steps and some evaluation tools. | Plan is partially developed or missing important steps or assessment tools. | Plan is unclear or missing key elements. | ___ /15 |
| 5. Reflection & Ethical/Cultural Humility | Demonstrates deep reflection on team learning, ethical issues, and cultural humility in design and implementation. | Shows thoughtful reflection on most ethical and cultural aspects. | Reflection is superficial or missing key ethical considerations. | Little to no reflection on ethics or cultural humility. | ___ /15 |

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| 6. Presentation & Professionalism | Written report (APA 7th) and oral presentation are polished, engaging, and professional. Visual component is clear and well-designed. | Written and oral work are clear and well-organized with minor APA7 or design issues. | Organization or APA7 formatting issues reduce clarity. | Report and/or presentation are poorly organized, with major APA or clarity problems. | ___ /10 |
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Final Group Oral Presentation Rubric

Total: 100 points (15 % of course grade)

| Criteria | Excellent 90-100 | Proficient 80-89 | Basic 70-79 | Needs Improvement <70 | Points |
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| 1. Organization & Structure | Presentation has a clear, logical flow. Transitions are smooth. | Mostly clear and logical organization; minor transition issues. | Organization is uneven; sections are missing. | Lacks clear structure; major sections missing. | ___ /20 |
| 2. Content & Theoretical Integration | Accurately presents the intervention and connects it explicitly to course theories. Demonstrates deep understanding of cultural and ethical context. | Presents intervention clearly and connects to theories with adequate rationale. | Covers project superficially or with weak theoretical links. | Content inaccurate, incomplete, or disconnected from course theories. | ___ /25 |
| 3. Engagement & Delivery | Speakers maintain eye contact, speak clearly and confidently. Team members balance participation and respond thoughtfully to questions. | Generally clear and professional delivery; minor lapses in balance or Q&A. | Delivery uneven; some members dominate or are hard to hear; Q&A weak. | Delivery unclear, unprofessional, or disengaged; major Q&A problems. | ___ /20 |

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| 4. Visual Aids & Supporting Materials | Slides, poster, or infographic are visually appealing, concise, and free of errors; effectively enhance key messages. | Visuals clear and mostly free of errors. | Visuals cluttered or with notable design problems. | Visuals absent, confusing, or seriously flawed. | __ /15 |
| 5. Integration of Field Experience & Reflection | Presentation highlights field data and shows strong reflection on cultural humility, ethics, and team learning. | Good use of field data and reflection with minor gaps. | Limited field evidence or superficial reflection. | Lacks field evidence and reflective component. | __ /10 |
| 6. Professionalism & Timing | All presenters are punctual, well-prepared, and professional. | Minor issues with preparation or timing. | Noticeable preparation gaps or significant timing deviations. | Unprepared, unprofessional, or severely off time. | __ /10 |

Course Readings

Aboud, Y. Z., et al. (2023). Evaluating gifted students' perceptions of the characteristics of effective teachers. *Frontiers in Education*, 8, 1088674.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1088674>

Chen, P.-H., et al. (2022). The role of teachers' constructivist beliefs in classroom practice. *Education Sciences*. <https://PMC.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9226578/>

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Langelaan, B. N., et al. (2024). Differentiating instruction: Understanding the key elements and challenges. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0742051X23004523>

Lekas, H.-M., Pahl, K., & Lewis, C. (2020). Rethinking cultural competence: Shifting to cultural humility. *HSS Journal: The Musculoskeletal Journal of Hospital for Special Surgery*. <https://PMC7756036/>

Machost, H., et al. (2023). Reflective practices in education: A primer for practitioners. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 22(1), Essay 1. <https://PMC10228263/>

Mansfield, K. C., et al. (2024). Culturally responsive leadership: A critical analysis of one district's equity plan (links CR teaching/pedagogy & student voice). *Frontiers in Education*, 9, 1385788. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1385788>

Monteiro, V., Carvalho, C., & Santos, N. N. (2021). Creating a supportive classroom environment through teachers' effective feedback: Effects on school identification and behavioral engagement. *Frontiers in Education*, 6, 661736. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.661736>

Orland-Barak, L. (2007). Teacher learning through the lens of sociocultural theory. Brill. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344701896_Teacher_Learning_Through_the_Lens_of_Sociocultural_Theory

Pradeep, K. (2024). Neuroeducation: Understanding neural dynamics in learning and teaching. *Frontiers in Education*, 9, 1437418. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1437418>

Walker, K. (2022). Partnering with families through special education: Research brief. Center on Education and Training for Employment (OSU). <https://cete.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Special-Education-Research-Brief-2022.pdf>

Wilkins, N. J., Dever, B. V., & Brier, N. J. (2022). Classroom management and facilitation

approaches that foster school connectedness. *Preventing School Failure*, 66(4), 319–328. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.13279>

Yu, B., et al. (2023). Self-regulated learning: A key factor in the effectiveness of online learning—A mini-review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 1051349. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1051349>

Extended Bibliography

Akdeniz, A. A., Demir, O., & Uysal, S. (2022). Exploring the impact of self-regulated learning intervention in industrial design studio education. *International Journal of Technology and Design Education*, 32(4), 845–860.

Granger, K. L., Algozzine, B., & Martin, E. W. (2025). Teacher's classroom management self-efficacy and conflict with challenging behavior in early childhood settings. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*.

Gülmez, D., & Ordu, A. (2022). Back to the classroom: Teachers' views on classroom management after COVID-19. *International Journal of Modern Education Studies*, 6(2), 257–286.

Gunersel, A. B., Ettekal, A. V., & Tan, S. (2023). Effective classroom management in middle level schools. *Middle Grades Review*, 9(1), Article 7.

Xu, Z., Zhao, Y., & Liew, J. (2023). A meta-analysis of self-regulated learning strategies and academic performance in online and blended learning environments. *Educational Research Review*, 39, 100504.